

Savoyardage

The newsletter of the Madison Savoyards, Ltd.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #89 - November 2007

Summer 2008 Production: *The Mikado*

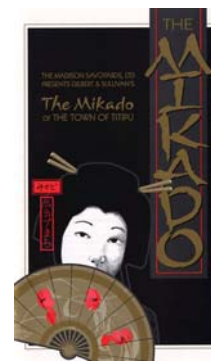
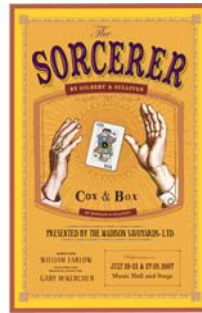
Terry Kiss Frank returns as Stage Director with Christopher Ocasek as Musical Director and Conductor
Page 3

With Ringing Cheer

Mark your calendars and plan to attend Friday, Feb 1, 2008 at First United Methodist Church
Page 2

The Sorcerer and Cox & Box DVD to be released

The summer 2007 production complete with Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound
Page 3



The Mikado

At left, the cover of the 1998 production, the most recent. In 2008: our sixth Mikado
Page 2



From the President

"Oh, it's too much happiness!" exclaims Tessa in *The Gondoliers*, when she learns that both a banquet and a dance are being planned.

Tessa's expression of delight comes to mind when we count the pleasures of the past year for the Madison Savoyards

This summer's production, the double bill of *The Sorcerer* and *Cox & Box*, shone with the high quality that we know to expect from the Savoyards. Beautiful music, sparkling comic language, and hilarious situations abounded: the classic G&S combination, even though the librettist for *Cox & Box* was not Gilbert, but F.C. Burnand. This Madison premiere of *Cox & Box* was a worthy addition to the Savoyards' repertoire, and Madison reviewers all proclaimed "thumbs up" ("Madison Savoyards Double the Fun," said the *Capital Times*). William Farlow, director of the University Opera, staged both works, in partnership with conductor and music director, Gary McKercher. A

special treat was the participation of guest artist James Schaffner of the New York City Opera, who blended his rich lyric tenor and comic skills with the talents of his Savoyards colleagues. Many a listener must have sat back and thought, "Oh rapture!"

Winter, too, brought G&S merriment, in the form of "Winter Spells," the Savoyards' third annual February concert and sing-along, directed by the accomplished and devoted G&S aficionado John Kruse. The First Unitarian Society Meeting House resounded with lively solos, ensembles, and choruses from G&S operas, performed by recent and not-so-recent Savoyards and other friends -- including the audience. (Next year's winter concert, "With Ringing Cheer," is set for February 1, 2008, at a new location: the First United Methodist Church, 203 Wisconsin Avenue.)

Several Savoyards board members deserve special recognition and thanks for the countless hours of work they contributed to ensure the success of this summer's show: Production Coordinator Scott Hurlbert; Treasurer Ilona Pinzke; Ticket Sales Manager and Publicity Coordinator Rachel Bishop; and photographer and newsletter co-editor Marie Schulte.

A brand new source of happiness this year was *Fanfare Magazine's* glowing review of the CD and

DVD of the Savoyards' 2006 production, *Patience*. The *Fanfare* reviewer wrote, "Director Terry Kiss Frank crafted an energetic, tasteful production and let W.S. Gilbert supply the humor. . . . The cast is adept at delivering Gilbert's humor. They know which lines, and often words, need to be emphasized and how to punch them without gratuitous overstatement. Nary a joke was lost." (For a longer excerpt, see the Savoyards' Web site at www.madisonsavoyards.org.)

This achievement was due in no small part to the Savoyards' energetic and talented board member Evan Richards, who worked tirelessly and expertly on these recordings, in partnership with professional audio engineer Buzz Kemper of Audio for the Arts. It was Evan who took the groundbreaking step of sending the *Patience* recordings for professional review by *Fanfare*. Evan's confidence was justified -- and the Savoyards owe him a big vote of thanks, not only in this sphere, but because he, a multi-tasker like the famous Pooh-Bah of *The Mikado*, also fills the posts of board Secretary, Webmaster, dramaturg, and co-editor of this newsletter, in addition to monitoring the Savoyards' national and international recording sales through Amazon.com.

Speaking of *The Mikado* -- here's more good news: this beloved G&S classic will be the Savoyards' 2008 production. G&S veteran Terry Kiss Frank,

who directed the outstanding production of *Patience* in 2006, has accepted the position of stage director, with the talented Christopher Ocasek joining her as music director and conductor in his Savoyards debut. (Mark your calendars: July 18-20 and 25-27, 2008.)

The Madison Savoyards School Outreach program has performed Terry Kiss Frank's abridged 45-minute version of *The Sorcerer* to enthusiastic and well-informed young audiences this year, and future school performances are being planned. For everyone who hopes that the joys of G&S will be kept alive by the next generation, this is a program to applaud (and support). Individual outreach concerts at community locations organized by John Kruse and performed by volunteers were also highly successful.

The Savoyards received financial support from multiple sources this year in recognition of their high-quality work. At this writing, grants have come from the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, Madison Arts Commission, Wisconsin Arts Board, John Frautschi Foundation, and Arthur Strelow Trust -- all greatly appreciated. Another big thank-you goes to Madison Gas & Electric Company for the gift of printing the *Savoyardage* newsletter in its new color incarnation.

Finally, and extremely important, are the gifts -- large and small -- sent to the Savoyards this year from individual donors, whose support is essential to keep the Savoyards alive and flourishing. Now in their 46th year (a remarkable achievement!) the Madison Savoyards continue to provide the community with excellently performed, authentic productions of the brilliant G&S operettas -- and they could never do it without you.

- Dianne Sattinger

Tenor James Schaffner

Just before rehearsals began for the 2007 production, we were suddenly without a tenor. A national search was quickly mounted and James Schaffner, a tenor with extensive experience worldwide, was fortunately available. He helped us publicize the production by appearing on several radio programs (WPR, 92.1, WORT) and in other events. His portrayals of Box and Alexis were outstanding. He appears as Alfredo in *La Traviata* at the Skylight Opera Theater in Milwaukee in February.

"With Ringing Cheer"

Be sure to save **Friday, February 1, 2008** for another delightful evening of Gilbert and Sullivan: "With Ringing Cheer." The location this year is the **First United Methodist Church** near the Square. The program will include selections from recent and future productions, other favorites, and perhaps some rarely heard gems.



Evan Richards, Gary McKercher, and James Schaffner being interviewed on radio 92.1 "The Mic"



Scene from the 2007 production of *Cox & Box*

James Schaffner (Box), Justin Wilder (Cox), and Ryan Thorn (Bouncer) (left to right) in the 2007 Madison premiere of *Cox & Box*. Written for a private party, it has not only survived but is still performed and recorded. *Cox & Box* was Arthur Sullivan's first experience in musical comedy. He was an established composer of much more "serious" music and this was just a taste of the Gilbert and Sullivan masterworks yet to come. (All photos in this issue by Marie Schulte.)



Scenes from the 2007 production of *The Sorcerer*

top left to right: James Schaffner, James Rowe, Julie Hutchinson; right: Justin Wilder



The Mikado in 2008

The 2008 summer production will be *The Mikado*, last produced by the Madison Savoyards in 1998. This will be our sixth production of *The Mikado*. Previous productions were in 1969, 1975, 1983, 1990, and 1998. *The Mikado* joins *HMS Pinafore* at six productions only exceeded by *The Pirates of Penzance* with seven. There will be six performances scheduled with a seventh possible if ticket sales require. The performance dates are July 18-19-20 and 25-26-27 and all performances will be in Music Hall.

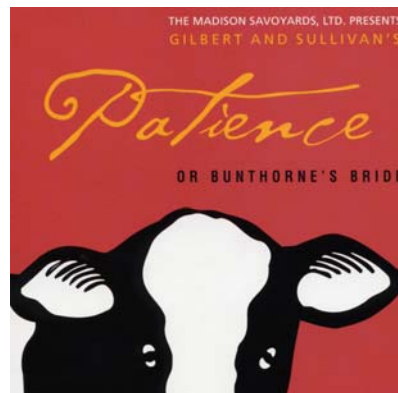
Terry Kiss Frank returns as Stage Director. She directed *Patience* in 2006 to great acclaim and has appeared in many previous productions, most recently as Ruth in the 2005 *Pirates of Penzance*. Christopher Ocasek will make his Madison Savoyards debut as Music Director and Conductor.

Savoyards DVDs

Beginning in 2004 with a video recording of extensive portions of *Ruddigore*, the Madison Savoyards have made video recordings of each summer production. The 2005 *Pirates of Penzance* was recorded complete and proved to be so popular that we felt we should improve the audio track by having a professional recording made. Buzz Kemper of Audio for the Arts has been the recording engi-

neer for *Patience* in 2006 and *Cox & Box* and *The Sorcerer* in 2007. Buzz has extensive experience in the field including the upcoming Mozart recording of three early piano concertos and the Symphony #38 by the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. In 2006 we had ten microphones, each recorded on a separate track which were subsequently mixed into stereo CD (two disc set) and a Dolby Digital 5.0 Surround Sound track for the DVD.

Fanfare reviewed the CD and DVD in their July/August 2007 issue. *Fanfare* has graciously granted permission for us to reproduce their very thorough and highly favorable review on our website. The review inspired us to make further improvements in the process for this year's upcoming release. Buzz felt the stereo image could benefit by adding two microphones bringing the total to 12. The process of mixing the surround sound track will benefit greatly from a new capability to mix and hear results in "real time". This year's release will have a Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound track.



The microphone placement had five microphones spread across the lip of the stage to capture voices. Those microphones are mixed primarily to the left, center, and right channels to replicate the actual spread. There are three microphones just above the orchestra: left, center, and right. There is a pair of microphones high above the stage near the top of the proscenium just back of the curtain and another in the house, high above the audience so that there

is no visual interference for patrons in the balcony. The over stage microphones are mixed into left and right primarily with a small amount into the surround channels. The house mikes are mixed mostly into the surround channel. The result is a sound image as one would experience in the center of the second or third row of the main floor. When you hear applause, much of it sounds like it is coming from behind the listener. With very rare exceptions such as a closing curtain brushing a mi-

crophone, the levels and mixing arrangement remains fixed for the entire performance to give a consistent sound stage for the DVD viewer/listener. We hope you will enjoy this year's release as much as we are enjoying preparing it. Our goal is to learn from each year's recording experience and make improvements in the next year's.

Renew your Membership

Yes, I am doing my part to ensure more Gilbert and Sullivan productions. I've enclosed my gift of:

- Member (\$25-\$49)
 Patron (\$50-\$99)
 Sustaining Member (\$100-\$499)
 Benefactor (\$500-\$999)
 Sponsor (1,000+)
- Endowment Fund (\$_____) *
 Other _____
- Please list my contribution as "Anonymous" in your program.

Names: _____

*The Endowment Fund is managed by the Madison Community Foundation for the benefit of the Madison Savoyards.

Street Address: _____ Apt #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

Sorcerer and Cox & Box DVD advance sale - Release planned for Winter 2007-8

DVDs/CD desired (please specify quantities)

Quantity	Price
_____ <i>Cox&Box</i> and <i>The Sorcerer</i> (2007) DVD @\$25.00	_____
_____ <i>Patience</i> (2006) DVD @20.00	_____
_____ <i>Patience</i> (2006) CD @20.00	_____
_____ <i>Pirates of Penzance</i> (2005) DVD @20.00	_____
_____ <i>Ruddigore</i> (highlights) (2004) DVD @20	_____
	DVD/CD Total: _____
All prices include sales tax	Donation: (Thank You!) _____

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www.madisonsavoyards.org

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